



Nor'wester newsletter

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House of Representatives Passed WRDA 2022

After many bipartisan statements from Members of the U.S. House of Representatives encouraging passage of the bill, the House passed the Water Resources Development Act ([WRDA](#)) of 2022 on June 8.

PNWA Supported Projects Included

PNWA is grateful for the efforts of House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D, OR-4) for his leadership and ensuring the bipartisan bill is passed on a biannual basis. The Pacific Northwest delegation is also to be commended for their work to include several PNWA priorities in the bill including:

- Expansion of Section 214 to include processing mitigation bank permits.
- Modifications to the project for navigation for the Boat Launch Connector Channel, Everett Harbor and Snohomish River, Washington.
- Tacoma Harbor Navigation Improvement Project.
- Modifications to the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, Lake Washington Ship Canal, Washington to improve environmental conditions and passage for fish.
- Howard A. Hanson Dam, Water Supply and Ecosystem Restoration.
- Modifications to the project for navigation for the Boat Haven Marina Breakwater, Port Townsend, Washington.
- Environmental dredging including “the project for navigation, Columbia and Lower Willamette Rivers, Oregon and Washington, in the vicinity of the Albina Turning Basin, River Mile 10, and the Post Office Bar, Portland Harbor, River Mile 2.”
- Expediting the completion of a determination of the feasibility of improvements proposed by non-Federal interest for deepening and widening of the navigation project for Coos Bay, Oregon.
- Clarifying jetty and breakwater maintenance and rehabilitation with respect to authorized height and conditions such as changing wave height resulting from sea level rise, etc.

Snake River Dams

There are a couple of provisions in the bill related to the Snake River Dams, however they all include protection of the federal infrastructure. If you have any questions, contact [Heather Stebbings](#).

- Section 105 Removal of Manmade Obstruction to Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects includes a savings clause that states the authority in this section does not apply to the four Lower Snake River Dams.
- Title V Columbia River Basin Restoration would establish a Trust and Columbia Basin Task Force to establish procedures for the preparation and approval of a restoration plan approved by two-thirds of the Task Force. The Secretary of the Army for Civil Works would then recommended restoration projects to Congress for authorization and appropriations.

For Awareness

The bill also includes authorization for Government Accountability Office (GAO) studies on:

- Mitigation
- Compensatory mitigation
- Waterborne statistics data collection for all maritime activities at ports including fish landings and aquaculture

Next Steps

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed WRDA 2022 on May 4, but it has not been scheduled for a vote by the full Senate at this time. PNWA will continue to work with our delegation as WRDA 2022 negotiations move forward. The House and Senate both hope to pass WRDA 2022 and be in conference committee by early July in order to reach a compromise and pass the full legislation by the end of July prior to the August recess. The bill would then head to the President to be signed into law.

To read the House of Representatives version of the bill, click [here](#).

To read the Senate EPW Committee version of the bill, click [here](#).

Draft Lower Snake River Dams Benefit Replacement Report released

Yesterday, Senator Patty Murray (D, WA) and Governor Jay Inslee (D, WA) released the draft [Lower Snake River Dams: Benefit Replacement Report](#) produced by Kramer Consulting and Ross Strategic. The report is part of the Federal/State process initiated last October to inform a recommendation from the Senator and Governor on whether there are reasonable means for replacing the services and benefits provided by the lower Snake River dams (LSRD) to support dam breaching as part of a salmon recovery strategy for region.

The report puts a price tag of between \$10.3 billion - \$27.2 billion on breaching, with recognition throughout that additional analysis is needed to fully assess the costs and the economic, social and transportation impacts associated with LSRD removal.

The report oversimplifies the concept of dam removal and lacks recognition of the inability and improbability of truly replacing their benefits. In a press release late yesterday, I shared some of PNWA's concerns:

"There are significant gaps in the report as it relates to understanding the reality of shifting to alternative transportation modes, permitting and developing the infrastructure that would be required, impacts to Northwest and U.S. farmers, and the true ability to meet our regional and national climate goals without the dams in place," said PNWA Executive Director Heather Stebbings. "The report raises more questions than it answers and does not provide a solid foundation upon which a decision as substantial as this one could be made."

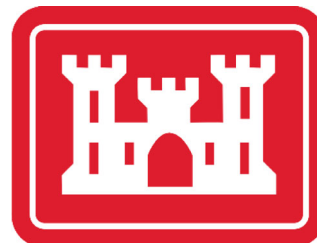
PNWA's press release on the draft report can be found [here](#). The full draft report can be viewed on the project website, www.lsrdoptions.org. A public comment period is currently open through July 11, 2022.

PNWA continues to review the draft in detail and will be submitting robust comments. We encourage interested members to provide their feedback either to PNWA for inclusion in our comments or directly through the [online portal](#) or via [email](#). Following the public input period, tribal consultation, and other means of engagement, the report will be updated and released in final form in late summer. The Senator and Governor are expected to consider all the information provided and make their recommendations shortly thereafter.

If you have any questions, please contact [Heather Stebbings](#).

USACE Director of Civil Works Partner Update

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sent out a quick update on the programs and projects the Corps team has been working on over the past few months. The update included:



Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Update

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works [OASA(CW)] released a [Federal Register](#) notice announcing virtual sessions in June and July regarding the modernization of the Civil Works program through a number of related policy initiatives that [can be found here](#).

The OASA(CW) recently completed public and tribal virtual sessions focused on the formal review of Nationwide Permit (NWP) 12 for oil or natural gas pipeline activities. The virtual meetings as well as over 48,000 written comments provided input to inform future potential decision-making related to NWP 12. Further information [can be found here](#).

Corps Water Infrastructure Financing Program Proposed Rule Published

The proposed rule to establish the [Corps Water Infrastructure Financing Program \(CWIFP\)](#) has been published in the [Federal Register](#). CWIFP is a long-term, low-cost federal credit program that was authorized by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) and will enable local investment in dam safety infrastructure projects for creditworthy non-Federal borrowers. Following public review, a final rule is expected to be published as soon as Spring of 2023, allowing for the program to accept loan applications shortly thereafter.

Construction Project Partnering Playbook Released

A UACE team recently published the Construction Project Partnering Playbook. The first in a series, this Playbook synthesizes best practices and lessons learned from our industry partners as well as our own partnering champion representatives and field practitioners to set the standard for how partnering will be implemented on all USACE construction projects across the full life cycle of delivery. Additional information and a copy of the [playbook can be found here](#).

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